

All Hallows Parish Prays For a Miracle

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Bayview-Waden Br.

VERTICAL FILE

By Susan Herbert

The long banners strung on the walls of All Hallows Church in the Bayview are quiet evidence of the parishioners' unshakable optimism.

"For with God, nothing shall be impossible," the banners read.

In the pews, churchgoers say their rosary and novenas daily as they wait for word that their church will not close at the end of this month.

Unless Vatican officials in Rome overrule Archbishop John R. Quinn, however, the 108-year-old white-frame church on Newhall Street has only about three weeks more to minister to its multi-ethnic parishioners.

"I don't think a miracle will happen," said the Rev. Robert McElroy, director of pastoral planning for the Archdiocese of San Francisco. "I believe Rome will uphold the archbishop's decision."

All Hallows is one of nine churches slated to close as part of the archdiocesan plan to consolidate its ministries in the face of diminishing contributions and a shortage of priests.

All Hallows is closing because it did not measure up to the criteria of a viable parish, according to the Pastoral Planning Commission, which made its recommendations to the archbishop in November.

"We are viable. What more does he want from us?" asked Judy Devere, a 65-year-old Filipina parishioner, on Wednesday after Mass. "We are still waiting to see the archbishop and hear from his lips just what is wrong with us."

On Sunday, May 29, Quinn

visited the parish, said Sunday Masses, and delivered homilies, but he did not specifically address the closure.

"The church was packed. Every parish group brought their banner to show him how much goes on here," said Devere. "He offered no encouragement."

All Hallows, with its Fili-
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pino, Samoan, Latino, African-American, Chinese, Irish, and Italian parishioners, is a reflection of the changing demographics of Bayview-Hunters Point, an area that was once mostly African-American.

"Qualitative" reasons

The pastoral planners recommended that Quinn close All Hallows because it determined that All Hallows showed declining Mass attendance and that almost half of those attending Mass there were coming from outside the parish boundaries.

Once All Hallows closes, Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Paul of the Shipwreck, both predominantly African-American parishes, will be the two Catholic churches serving Bayview-Hunters Point.

Changes in Polling Places

The registrar of voters has announced two changes in voting locations for Tuesday's primary election:

- Voters in Precinct 2401 should vote at Jefferson School, 1725 Irving Street.
- Voters in Precinct 2547 should vote at the public library, 387 Ashton Street.

For more information on these or other city voting locations, call 554-4375.

At a meeting with the parish council in March, McElroy said that All Hallows was closing for "qualitative not quantitative reasons." That statement left the parishioners puzzled.

vent several years ago.

McElroy said that the youth program that emanated from All Hallows would continue under the auspices of the archdiocese and that the archdio-

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McElroy explained his comment for the Independent:

"The commission reached a conclusion that a more effective pastoral outreach could be made if the church's resources in Bayview-Hunters Point were concentrated in two parishes rather than three. The commission then asked which two could provide more effective outreach for the coming decade. The commission felt that Our Lady of Lourdes had a greater vitality and was more rooted in the Bayview-Hunters Point community."

"Geographically, it makes sense to pick a church for the northern half and a church for the southern half," McElroy said.

McElroy said that the money from All Hallows' coffers would stay in the community. All Hallows reportedly has more than \$600,000 in its parish bank account from the sale of its con-

cense would subsidize it — providing an estimated \$30,000 — for the first year.

McElroy said that funds also would go to subsidize St. Paul of the Shipwreck elementary school.

"The school has had a dramatic shortfall in operating revenue because of AFDC [welfare grant] cutbacks," McElroy said. "They need \$90,000 this fiscal year and will need more next year. It looks like we will have to subsidize it on a regular basis."

Combining the parishes

Despite the unwillingness of many parishioners to accept the eminent closure, the transition is moving

ahead, McElroy said.

The Rev. Kirk Ullery, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes, will move into All Hallows' rectory, and the rectory and part of the school will be used as a center for the combined parishes.

The All Hallows chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society will continue as an independent group, keeping its own bank account. The group will be allowed to use parish space for its thrift shop.

Because many of All Hallows' parishioners say they are not comfortable with the gospel singing at Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Paul of the Shipwreck churches, McElroy said Ullery would establish a more traditional Mass at his church for them.

"Father Goode [pastor of St. Paul of the Shipwreck] is willing to do whatever he can do, but no one [from All Hallows] has talked about going to that church," McElroy said.

The Knights of Peter Claver, an African-American group, has already chosen St. Emydius church in the Ingleside District as its base.

McElroy said no plans would be made for All Hallows' church building for at least a year.

"I wonder if 20 years down the line if the church will have to evangelize in this area," wondered one parishioner. "I hope I'm proven wrong."